

Point Three



The Toc H magazine
April 1981 10p



Point Three

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Letters and articles are welcomed and should be addressed to the Toc H Editorial Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911). Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

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The cover picture shows Mrs Clara Robinson — a member of Kendal Branch for the past 40 years — receiving the Lord Hunt Award. See also In Brief in this issue.

Photo Westmorland Gazette



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House — the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points — to think fairly.

Guest Editorial

WHITHER THE CHURCH?

I heard once that Tibetans bath three times only — at birth, marriage and death. The average man makes use of the Church on only three occasions: it is conventional to have a child christened; the ancient edifice makes a wonderful background for the wedding photography, and a funeral service is a 'must'.

Let us take a look at the average man's image of the Church today, for it is that image in men's minds that decides their attitudes towards it. On what basis have we built this image?

If we look back through English history we see that pews in our churches have been occupied, and the Church financially supported by slave traders, by allied merchants, and by hard hearted industrialists who exploited men, women and children at starvation wages to work their factories. At times, heads of the English church set patterns of immoral living that spread throughout the population, burning at the stake those whose interpretation of the scriptures varied slightly from their own. We recall the horror of the Crusades. In all ages, some have worn the cloth for a living instead of a calling, and given support of the Church to those who owned the 'living'. And so on.

Since the time of Christ there have been only isolated cases of men who really practised Christianity — men like St Francis of Assisi, Brother Lawrence, Dr Martin Luther King, and the Hindu, Gandhi.

Personal experiences, especially in our very early days, remain with us throughout our lifetime. My Sunday School impressions are still vivid: I was told that to go to Heaven I must give up all those things that made life worth living for a healthy boy. RK in school was a study of the history of the Jews and of the early Church and the learning by rote of the Church Catechism in antedeluvian language.

I expect most adults have rebelled against 'organised religion' during their 'teens when they have begun to question the sincerity of their companions in a church community, or the relevance of rituals to the Christian ideal. The fundamentals of Christianity have been buried beneath a whole heap of rituals, man made dogmas, superstitions and material considerations. Christianity to most people is now a mirage.

What use to the next generation is this conventional set-up that we have created? Youth has always rebelled against the preceding generation. Today there is a wider gap than ever before. Youth rebels against our conventions in art, clothing, music, activities, behaviour, everything that to us is 'normal'. A completely new image of the Church must be created for them and with their co-operation where possible: simply patching up our conventional forms and rituals and playing 'pop music' in Church, will never work.

What has youth got that can be built upon? The young seek for truth and reasons for things. They have sympathy for those less fortunate than themselves. They have no room for insincerity or formality for the sake of formality. They have an international rather than a national outlook. They don't believe in politicians. Thanks to radio and television, they have a broader education than any preceding generation. They see no reason why there should be strife between nations over things that don't really matter. They feel no security for the future while madmen still exist in the world of the 'H' bomb. Above all, there is a spiritual vacuum for there is no ideal to work and live to.

I believe that the Church must start again from scratch. The original Christian challenge must be presented devoid of all the trimmings. I believe that youth would accept the challenge. My views on how to present this will be seen by many as heretical, but I am convinced that religion in the future must be a world wide conception embracing observers of all those great and ancient religions based on 'God The Father' — Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian . . .

Our most impressionable years are our earliest. Stories of 'godly' men, irrespective of which religion they happened to belong to, should be the meat for the junior Sunday School and for later RK lessons — Buddha and Gandhi, as well as St Francis and Martin Luther King. From this, we should build up to readings from all the great religious philosophers and then study the life of Christ with emphasis on his real teachings. The miraculous should be ignored in all cases. Conventional Church services would have to be continued for the adult population but I would send most of the clergy back to school to study the writings of religious philosophers other than Christian.

I feel that the time is ripe for organising a convention of a cross section of the rising generation to discuss this question in the presence of experts who could supply provide a starting point for a 'New Deal'. It should be organised by some body other than the existing Church. Why not Toc H?

'Limitations' of the Disabled

by Wilma Anic

Wilma has just completed three years of quite outstanding work as our HQ print room supervisor. (Regular readers will recall that she was the subject of last month's cover picture). She has now left us for Stoke Mandeville Hospital where she is resuming her interrupted career as a physiotherapist. —Editor

When I think about disability and the problems surrounding it, I come back constantly to the word 'limitations'.

I was disabled at the age of 24 and was lucky enough to be able to return home from hospital after only seven months of rehabilitation.

While in hospital I felt I knew what confinement to a wheelchair meant in practical terms, but the meaning only really became apparent when I left hospital and tried to pick up the threads of my life again. Suddenly I couldn't go out with my friends if they decided to go to a certain theatre or restaurant; I couldn't go to most of their homes because I couldn't use their toilet — usually upstairs; travelling (other than on motorways) was inconceivable because of toilet problems. In short life was extremely limited.

Two years after my injury I left Scotland and came to England to work as a physiotherapist at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. As you would expect, not only was this hospital completely suitable for wheelchairs but many new buildings and shops in Aylesbury had been built with access for the disabled. Suddenly, there were fewer limitations, and I began to live life again the way it should be lived. It's almost impossible to convey how much a simple ramp or a suitable toilet can mean to a person confined to a wheelchair.

Since my injury I have worked in my own profession as a physiotherapist, married, lived abroad for seven years, and worked for the past three years as the Toc H print room supervisor at Wendover. Over the years I have constantly defeated my limitations and — sometimes in spite of my own misgivings — I have overcome in one way or another most of the problems of disability. I know that I am lucky but I had to be my own taskmaster, ignoring the sceptics who told me that things were impossible and only being satisfied if I had attempted something myself regardless of whether I succeeded or failed. Many disabled people never get the chance to find their *true* limitations. They live in institutions, and through



Photo: Scott Shaw

necessity are regimented to a greater or lesser extent.

If you want to help, then campaign for the elimination of architectural barriers. In co-operation with a local organisation for the disabled, make a survey of the area in which you live (preferably with a disabled person). Find out how things can be improved to allow disabled people access to schools, council offices, hospitals, clinics, dental surgeries, shops, churches and places of entertainment. Make sure that your local Council includes purpose built dwellings for disabled people in their housing plans.

Finally and most importantly, give the disabled you are trying to help the opportunity to be *active* in organising various projects and plans, whether they concern the disabled or not. Allow them to do their own thinking!



Thornaby and Stockton (Cleveland) Toc H members followed up their 'Rose Tea' with a 'Friendship Circle Birthday Tea' and used the funds raised for Christmas parties for 'Gingerbread' children and the children of battered wives.



This picture was taken during Conwy (Gwynedd) Men's Branch's latest entertainment staged in a Llanfairfechan hospital. At present, the hospital has some 2-300 patients, all either mentally or physically handicapped. The Branch has mounted these entertainments regularly for the past 20 years and they have ranged from cricket matches and car runs to full length stage shows — often with patient participation. Everyone has always given his services to the stage shows without fee. Recently, Bangor Joint Branch has shared responsibility for these monthly entertainments and it is hoped that this co-operation will continue.

Photo: North Wales Weekly News

In Brief...

● Our cover picture this month shows Clara Robinson – for the past 40 years a keen member of Kendal (Cumbria) Joint Branch – receiving the valued Lord Hunt Award of the Countryside Holidays Association. Her citation reads: *'Her whole life has been in every way a living witness to the association's ideals. Her love of the outdoors, her capacity for enjoyment, her ability to infect others with her zest for life, her ability to communicate with young and old, rich and poor as well as her compassion for the under privileged make her the epitome of all that is best in association membership'*. Such a citation might well have been written by us of Clara's Toc H life! Her Branch tell us that Clara – a 77 year old widow – now lives alone and has only recently started to walk again after an accident which kept her in hospital for many months. She shows indomitable courage, has never been heard to complain and 'is an inspiration to all who meet her'. We all send our warmest congratulations.

● Bognor Regis Men's Branch are always willing and usually able to offer hospitality to small parties. Last summer, for example, they welcomed to their meeting room a party of blind people from Basingstoke and on another occasion entertained a North Hants projects team of 12 physically handicapped children and 12 volunteers. The comfortably furnished Branch meeting room is very well used but by prior arrangement it can be made available from 1 pm to around 5.30 pm. Members would be happy to provide tea and even a song or two at the piano. Bognor is a town well suited for outings for the physically handicapped. It is not hilly; there is sand when the tide is out; there is a mile and half of promenade; there are lavatories for the disabled; the Branch meeting room is within a few minutes walk of the sea. If you want to take up this hospitality offer during the summer of 1981, write to the Branch Secretary, Jim Pope. His address is: 42 Leonora Drive, Bognor Regis, W Sussex PO21 3NH.

● We have just received a copy of a splendid souvenir programme for a grand pantomime – 'Sinbad', with what looks like a cast of hundreds! The show was staged in February in a Bakewell hospital and was organised by Bakewell (Derbys) Joint Branch. Among their tributes to all those responsible for a fine evening's entertainment, the Branch specially pick out Frank Saunders who drove the hospital minibus.

● The Clacton Branches are accustomed to good cover in their local newspapers but, judging by the cuttings we have received, the Men's Branch has recently broken all publicity records! A disabled member was on a charitable mission using the Branch's minibus when his own car – securely locked and carrying a 'disabled' sticker – was stolen. The car contained pension money, pension book and 'phone and TV licence stamps. Moreover, its loss left him immobilised: he depends on it to get to work. The mean thief abandoned the car later with only slight damage but minus contents, including his disability pension book.

● In January this year, the 'Holywell Goatdancers' staged a 'spontaneous drama project' for the patients of Coed Du, a local home for the mentally handicapped. The writing, rehearsal and performance of their own version of 'Snow White and the 13 Dwarves' all took place over a single weekend. Hospitality for the performers – including a roaring fire in the Branch room where they slept – was provided by Llanarmon Yn Ial (Clwyd, N Wales) Branch. These 'goatdancers' are a recently formed group, mainly from Holywell High School, who now meet regularly in each other's houses.

● In 1947, Brandon (Suffolk) Toc H gave a party to 35 temporarily evacuated Barnardo Boys. This went on for the next two years, ie until the boys returned to their own 'home'. In 1950 the Branch extended their operation to cover 90 over-70s and this party has continued annually ever since. In 1952 they started a weekly 'Old Friends Club' and the party now incorporates all 'over 60' members of that. Early this year they held their biggest and most successful party yet, entertaining about 140 old people and other guests to a full sit down supper. Afterwards, party games, dancing and a big free raffle were followed by a group of Polish dancers from Cambridge. Tea, cakes and mince pies were served during the interval. Mrs Bain, the oldest member of the Old Friends Club (95) was presented with a bouquet. The evening ended with a brief appearance by Toc H's own 'band' – the 'Agonisers'. Coach transport was provided – as it has been over the past 30 years – by Messrs Towler's, a local bus company.

There are three ways to get something done: do it yourself, employ someone or forbid your children to do it.

Welcome

The following Branches elected new members during January and February:

- 9 – Cleveland District Branch
- 8 – Bargoed (w)
- 4 – Bingham (m)
- 2 – Bala (w), Chiseldon (m), Fareham (j), Launceston (j), Mansfield Woodhouse (j), Redcar (j) Group, RHHI (j), Rushden (w)
- 1 – Buckingham (m), Erewash & Trent Valley District, Ipswich (w), Kettering (m), Leicester District, Middlesbrough (m), Rushden Afternoon (w), Saltash (m)

A warm welcome to 45 new members

Please Note Colsterdale

A new Warden for the Colsterdale Centre, Ronald Gash, has been appointed as from 1 March. He will be employed full time which will enable the Centre to remain open all the year round. Charges for 1981 are as follows:

	Adults	Children	Min Charge
Weekends	£ 4.25	£3.50	£ 51
Mid-weeks	£ 7.00	£5.00	£ 84
Full weeks	£11.25	£8.50	£135

There will also be a surcharge of 10% of the minimum charge for bookings in the period November to March inclusive to cover the additional cost of heating.

Talbot House, Poperinge

Please note that from 1 April 1981, all bookings for the Old House will be handled by:

Charles and Ivy Swan
Gasthuisstraat 43
8970 Poperinge
Belgium
(STD: 010 32 57 333228)

All bookings should be made in writing, please.

Another side of Tubby Clayton

by Patricia J Hunt

It is widely known in this country that Tubby Clayton founded Toc H. What may not be so well known is his interest in another movement — that of encouraging the young men who survived the First World War to train for Holy Orders.

During the War, he had compiled a long list of men who would be likely to undertake such training once hostilities ceased. After the Armistice, he had a large number of men ready, but could not find a building large enough to become the Training School. He discussed the matter with someone he knew in the Home Office, who suggested that the only empty buildings large enough for the proposal were gaols. Tubby Clayton was not put off by this idea and he went to see one such gaol in Knutsford in Cheshire. This gaol had been housing German prisoners of war; but Tubby had the imagination to see its possibilities.

In its pre-war days, the Knutsford Gaol had accommodated up to 700 inmates. According to the historian, the Revd H Green, it had *'held a highly favourable position for its management and superior discipline'*. Once Tubby Clayton's School had acquired it, it was to become superior

in another way. The forbidding prison outlook was to be abandoned and a cheerful college like atmosphere was to take its place: the cells were to become study bedrooms, filled with books and pictures; the workshops were to be transformed to common rooms and lecture halls; and the exercise yards were to become tennis courts and used for other sporting facilities. As one newspaper of the period put it, *'The cells are cells no more. They are homes.'* And one enthusiastic inmate said, *'Think what we would have given for billets like this in France!'*

The Training Course was free and the students were each given an allowance of £30 per year for their personal expenses. They had to pass examinations within a year, and went on first to University and then to training for ordination. At one time the School had well over 300 students.

The prison buildings stood opposite the Parish Church in Knutsford on the other side of the busy A50 main road. The men used the church as their chapel, since it was so handily situated, and the School staff often preached and helped at the Services. The men sat in the church

galleries, and one lady, who was present at the time, recalls how very much they enhanced the singing.

In the church there hangs a long college type photograph which shows the staff and students of the school — at least 200 or more men. Above the photograph is a stone plaque which reads:

The tablet records that during the years 1919-1922 following the FIRST WORLD WAR

by kindness of the vicar and people of the parish this church was used for divine worship by the ex-service men of all ranks training for Holy Orders in the prison buildings which then stood opposite to it.

In 1922, owing to ever increasing expenditure, the School in the prison buildings had to close. It was, however, transferred to another large building in Knutsford, which had once been a private house. This was 'Kilrie' which stands overlooking the Heath. This building is now a County Council Children's Home.

Later, in December 1926, the Ordination Test School moved its premises to Hawarden, near Chester.

Another sidelight of Tubby Clayton's time at Knutsford is seen in one of the lecterns in the Parish Church. This is made from brass shell cases brought from Poperinge in Flanders, and was presented to the church by Tubby.

I am indebted for some of the facts in this article to 'Planting' — The Life of Richard Burne — by Mary E S Burne (pub 1979).

We're still getting reports of Branch Christmas activities and here is an unusual one. For each of the past 17 years, Bingham (Notts) members have arranged for Santa Claus to arrive in their Market Place by some novel form of transport — rocket, Toc H Lamp, fire engine etc. This year he arrived inside a 9 ft diameter Christmas pudding which was 'cut' open by Radio Nottingham's John Holmes with a 9 ft long 'knife'. Each year Santa Claus collects toys from local children to be distributed by the Salvation Army to less fortunate children. This year's arrival was preceded by Christmas music from the Toothill Comprehensive School Band and followed by a Service of Carols.



Photo: The Advertiser Series, Newark

We will Remember...

Lack of space has compelled us to hold over some obituary notices received. We hope to include these in future issues.
— Editor

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In July

Elsie M Green (Hunstanton)

In October

Ellen McCormick (Deeside)

Sidney N Holloway (Parkhurst)

In November

Samuel Smith (Horwich)

In December

Hamish M Craig (West Kirby Beacon)

Dorothy H Fountain (Enfield)

Doris Haxell (Westminster)

Robert E Long (Tonbridge)

Susie A Williams (Bargoed)

In January

Samuel Bailey (Knowle)

Stanley W G Baldwin (Gloucester)

J 'Jimmy' Bell (Hythe)

Helen M Cushing (Toftwood)

Albert Drennan (Manchester Central)

Marjorie E Dunn (Codsall)

Rose E Dyer (Parkhurst)

Tom E Dyke (Milborne Port)

Alice M Hobbs (Chalfont)

Louisa A Hornsby (Acton)

Alfred G Hunt (Codsall)

Charles S Joyce (Chiseldon)

Eric C Knott (Beckenham & Pickhurst Green)

Winifred Nuttall (Sheffield)

Ethel A Payne (Hitchin)

J A 'Jack' Robertson (Jedburgh)

Maurice H Robinson (Nailsea)

Ewart H Screech (Saltash)

Percy C Veness (South East Essex District)

William D Wilkins (Dolgellau)

Hamilton W G Williams (Cardiff)

In February

Bernard Culliford (Walton — Somerset)

A 'Tony' Fisher (Swindon District)

Caroline E Harwood (West Somerset District)

Roger W O Bray (Twydall)

J F 'Jack' Sexon (Gwent District)

The Very Reverend Canon Emiel Lootens, Dean of Poperinge, died suddenly on 15 January. A Toc H delegation was invited to attend his funeral on 21 January...

The Dean himself was a member of Toc H and wore his badge with pride. There was always a very warm welcome at St Bertin's for those of us who attended a service there and many members will remember receiving at his hands, both in Poperinge and in London, where he last concelebrated at All Hallows at last year's Festival.



Born in December 1913, ordained at Bruges in June 1938, he had filled many offices in various places before becoming Dean of Poperinge and Pastor of St Bertin's in 1967. He was unmistakably a man of God whose sense of mission extended to involvement over a wide field, but never as a formality. We who were privileged to know him as a personal friend were well aware of his genuine regard for and belief in the role of Toc H. His faith could but strengthen our own.

The growing relationship with Toc H and Talbot House, begun under his predecessor in 1963 and so warmly confirmed by the Bishop of Bruges at the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1965, was developed under him, both in official and deeply personal ways, as a triple partnership with church and town. He rejoiced with us in the increasing interest of the young people of Poperinge and in the ever strengthening international friendships in which we were all involved.

He would have been delighted with the beautifully sung Gregorian Mass at the funeral service in his beloved church, attended by the Bishop and packed almost beyond capacity, and with the series of tributes from representatives of various interests. It was fitting that it should be that of St Bertin's itself which specifically referred to his links with Toc H.

The Toc H delegation was invited by the members of his family to the dinner at De Kring that followed the interment, where they expressed their appreciation of our attendance and where the width of friendship amongst the clergy of the Deanery, councillors and many others was abundantly manifest. Indeed, one almost felt part of the family in the widest sense.

Emiel Lootens, Dean of Poperinge, is truly one of the Elder Brethren we remember with proud thanksgiving.

Canon Norman Motley was Chief Anglican Padre of Toc H from 1950 to 1955. So any tribute from us must inevitably be incomplete. In those years, Toc H was searching for a new sense of direction and a recovery of self confidence. His experience in industry, and as an RAF Chaplain had a deep influence on our thinking. He believed that, through our network of members and Branches, we had a special opportunity to influence the quality of life in our own country and overseas.

He had the unusual capacity to relate these ideals to the local situation, indeed to the individual who was looking for a significant place in his chosen group. The Othona Community was his inspiration, and he would probably have wished for closer links with Toc H than we had.

His pastoral care for individuals never waned. As recently as 1976 he was still in close touch with the dying widow of a padre whom Norman had brought on to the staff more than 20 years before.

Our invitation that he should preach in Westminster Cathedral in 1980 was yet another proof that he continued to hold his place in Toc H. We add our thanksgiving to that from thousands of others, with many of whom he sustained a deeply personal relationship.

BK

Gordon Bellingham died in Saltash in January at the age of 57. Gordon joined Toc H in 1940 and his service in most offices included a valuable period on the Central Executive Committee from 1952. In 1949 he became Town Clerk of Saltash — the youngest town clerk in the country — and held the office for 25 years. He became a freeman of his town in 1973 and Mayor in 1976. All through his adult life, Gordon devoted much of his time to work for others and he served with distinction on something like a dozen major voluntary bodies. As a Rotarian, he was given the rare honour of a Paul Harris Fellowship — an award granted in the name of Rotary's founder only to a member who has given exceptional service. But his greatest enthusiasm was reserved for Toc H and he was always the first to acknowledge how much he owed to the Movement. At the service of thanksgiving for Gordon's life — attended by Bodmin's MP and the Mayor and Mayoress of Saltash — the town's Wesley Church was packed and some 200 people listened in the Church Hall to a loudspeaker relay of the service.

FCC

We give thanks for their lives

From the Director

by Ken Prideaux-Brune



The rising tide of unemployment has brought to the surface various proposals for the introduction in some form or other of National Service. Taking all 18 year olds out of the job market for a year or so is certainly one way of reducing the unemployment figures at a stroke. Although there is unlikely to be very widespread support for the re-introduction of compulsory military service, a suggestion of a national scheme of community service sounds, at first sight, very much more attractive. This is the proposal being floated, in an unpublished but widely leaked report, by a group calling itself the Commission on Youth and the Needs of the Nation. Plausible as it sounds, however, it raises a great many vital, and as yet unanswered, questions.

There is an inbuilt contradiction in the concept of compulsory 'voluntary' service. It sounds a bit like the military

approach - 'We need three volunteers: you, you and you'. Is such a scheme more or less likely to encourage those involved to give voluntary service in later life? Time and energy freely given are essential not only to our social services but to the functioning of clubs and societies of all kinds, and to the maintenance of the democratic process itself. Will there not be a temptation to feel, once the period of compulsory service is finished: 'That's all over now, I've done my bit'?

How is this vast army of young people to be deployed? Who is to identify the needs which they can meet and how are sufficient supervisors to be recruited and trained? How can we ensure that they will not be taking over what should rightly be full time paid posts and thus increasing the number of people who are unemployed? How are the vast costs of a national scheme to be met?

These are some of the practical, and important, questions that need answering. Much more fundamental, however, is the need to be clear about what such a scheme is intended to achieve. Is it designed primarily to keep, for a time, substantial numbers of young people out of the dole queues and off the streets? Is it designed to provide the better care for those in need and the improvement of the environment which are essential if ours is to become a truly civilized society? Or is the prime purpose to provide that element of 'character training' which some felt was offered by National Service?

If, as I suspect, 'character training' is the main motive behind the proposal we need to ask what precisely is meant by this. Some would hope that it would bring about docility, deference and the acceptance of properly constituted authority. Others that it would create self reliant, questioning and constructively critical minds. Something more precise

than the phrase 'character training' is obviously required.

We all know from our experience how we have changed, and changed for the better, through our membership of Toc H. This change has come about largely through the discovery of the values which are important in making sense of life, through the discovery of the reality of love and forgiveness. It is not the result of someone deciding to train our character. It is the result of having the opportunity to reflect on our experience and to try, with others who shared the experience, to work out what it meant. That process is a slow one, and it cannot be hurried. It can come about only through discussion with those who shared the same experience, or a similar one. Toc H is a comparatively small organisation and yet we know that we are not as effective as we should be at enabling people to discuss and reflect on their experiences. How could this be effectively built into a national scheme of community service?

Voluntary service can be valuable as a way of overcoming the apathy and sense of worthlessness that unemployment can all too easily generate and we naturally want to do anything we can to encourage it. We will all welcome the long overdue pronouncement that the acceptance of voluntary work does not affect one's entitlement to unemployment benefit. The provision of the resources needed for a significant extension of the opportunities for people to have the experience of serving the community and to learn from that experience would be equally welcome. But to the suggestion of compulsory community service I can only say a firm 'no' - at least until the questions I have raised here are satisfactorily answered.

Community House in Nottingham

In our March issue (p15) Sue Cumming gave us some of the background thinking to the Mid Eastern Region's commitment to founding a Community House in Nottingham. She described the nature of the area - part of the All Saints parish - and sketched in some of the local problems. In our next (May) issue, we hope to have a fuller, illustrated account of the Toc H and church thinking on the plan. The picture here is a fairly typical general view of the area around All Saints.



Photo: Sue Cumming

JESUS & THE KINGDOM

Jesus' commonest teaching aid was the parable. Some of these, according to the evangelists, were to be understood allegorically. Thus, in the parable of the sower, each section relates to a particular circumstance or event and each fictional character has his own real counterpart. Sometimes he used parables to tell people something about themselves — a teaching device not always appreciated by those on the receiving end! He also made frequent use of parables to teach people about his Father, his Father's Kingdom, and their place in it. And in these parables he used the small things — things well within his hearers' experience of life — to drive home his lessons.

'The Kingdom of Heaven', he said, 'is like a grain of mustard seed.' It is capable of the smallest beginnings in the life of a person, of a society, of mankind. Something as small as that is not easily seen and so it is often overlooked. Yet a seed as small as that might be anywhere. It can remain hidden in nooks and crannies, and be undetected until the right conditions for growth occur. How difficult it is to be always aware of that when we are dealing with each other and with the world at large. And what a disturbing thought it can be! That person in the office whom you have just let fly at, that child to whom you have refused to listen, the husband or wife whom you have taken for granted, the old person whose very existence you have ignored — in all of them is that small seed of the Kingdom of God, awaiting warmth and light to make it grow — a warmth and light which you and I can either bring or withhold. There is a corollary to this: insofar as we fail to nourish the Kingdom in others, so we deprive ourselves of its growth in us.

The Pharisees are still the classic example of people who had inflicted that upon themselves — so many of them seem to have become cold and dead and hard. In attempting to define and fence in the Kingdom, and in attempting to reduce its freedom and its glory to what might be written in a statute book, they had become hidebound by their own legalism. In a book called *'Sacred and Confidential'* (by Hugh Burnett), there is a cartoon depicting two monks looking at a solid Victorian tomb, and one is saying to the other, *'Imagine resurrecting through that lot!'* In a funny sort of way, that's a real picture of the Pharisee — so locked into his legalistic system that resurrection to the new life of the Kingdom seemed impossible. Yet even there the tiny grain

of the seed of the Kingdom can find a place to hide, and, given the right conditions, will flourish and grow. Nicodemus seems to have been just such a case.

So the Kingdom of God can have the smallest of beginnings, but even the tiniest seeds don't stay small for ever, as long as in that smallness there is life. As the seed of which Jesus spoke in this short parable grew into one of the largest of the shrubs, so too the seed of the Kingdom can grow.

In another parable of the Kingdom, Jesus uses yeast as his example. Now yeast is extraordinary stuff. It can remain dormant for ages, and then, given warmth and food, can grow rapidly. Without it many of the things which we like to eat or drink would either be impossible to make, or else be dull and flat. Yeast transforms them, makes them complete, brings them into being. Once again, it's an example of small beginnings.

When my wife and I met, she was a chemistry student, and during some of our holidays we worked in a bio-chemical laboratory in Bournemouth. She did the chemistry, and I picked things from the garden, ground things up, and generally got in the way. One of the things I remember doing concerned the early stages of a particular preparation. It was quite simple — otherwise I wouldn't have been asked to do it! — and involved mixing yeast with sugar dissolved in warm water. *'Make sure you've got plenty of buckets,'* she said. Not until a dozen buckets were ready was I allowed to start, and then into two of them were placed brewers' yeast and a warm sugar solution. *'Give it a good stir, and then keep an eye on it. Whatever you do, don't leave it,'* she said. I did, and for a while nothing happened. I began to wonder why I'd got ten empty buckets which, as far as I could see, were doing nothing. Then I began to notice that things were happening after all. The two buckets, which had been no more than a third full, were now a good deal fuller — in fact, if I didn't do something about it, they were going to overflow. In the end, the ten empty buckets were enough — just! They were all full of a warm, gently bubbling mixture, which had a rather unfortunate smell! The yeast had done its job.

'The Kingdom,' said Jesus, *'is just like yeast — there may be only a little of it, but its effects will be widespread, and there will be no mistaking either its*

presence or its absence. Where it is present, there will be life and growth; where it is absent, there will be dullness and a lack of life.'

I want here to examine one more parable of the Kingdom, and it's a double one. *'The Kingdom is like a treasure which a man found in a field. He hid it again, and then, selling all that he had, went and bought the field. Again, it is like a merchant who finds a particularly beautiful pearl — he too sells all that he has in order to buy it.'* Here Jesus is saying two things about the Kingdom. In the first place, its existence is not always obvious — we have to search it out — we might come across it anywhere. (Note that there is no hint of exclusiveness in any of these three parables — A mustard seed might be found anywhere; yeast is common to all men and its effect, while it may not be understood by all, is appreciated by all; the Kingdom might be uncovered anywhere, from a muddy field to the most sophisticated of jewellers' shops.) Secondly, Jesus is saying that the Kingdom, wherever and however it is found, is of infinite value. It is, quite simply, worth all that a man possesses. There is only one way to make it your own, and that is to give up everything for it, since it is worth infinitely more than anything you now possess, or anything that you could possess. That is a hard demand, and some, like the rich young man who came to ask if he might follow Jesus, find themselves unable to meet it. Yet he asks nothing less: we should dedicate all that we have and do and are to the service of his Kingdom, for the Kingdom is worth all that and more.

Jesus tells us something else about the Kingdom that we, for some reason, generally find embarrassing. He talks about reward. We have come to think of reward as being a kind of underhand inducement to do something we don't particularly want to do. Perhaps that tendency is a reflection of the society in which we live, where rewards are often bribes. But it also reflects something more deep seated than that, which is certainly present in a great many people. Call it English reserve, if you like, but there is in us a concern about worthiness. We are, we feel, unworthy of praise or reward from each other, let alone from God, and so we often reject it when it comes. *'If you knew what I was really like . . .'* we say to people and *'Oh, it wasn't really very good . . .'* We often turn aside from reward because we feel in some way unworthy of it. What Jesus

by Revd Colin Rudd

does in these parables is to lift the whole thing out of that context. He is simply not concerned with worthiness as we understand the term. Rather, he talks in terms of consequences. The consequence of planting and tending mustard seed is that it grows into a shrub which gives shelter to many things that had nothing to do with its growing — they are simply glad of its presence. No concept of worthiness has anything to do with this, except the concept of a *given* worthiness. God considers that we are worthy to be his children, and nothing else matters. So the Kingdom offers us shelter, not because we have earned it in some way, but simply because we have freely accepted the offer.

Shelter on its own is all right for a while, but sooner or later we need food. In the second of our three parables, Jesus hints at the meeting of that need, too. The Kingdom, he says, is like yeast, and yeast is itself a food as well as being a constituent of other foods. We know now that yeast can be made to produce most of the protein that man needs, and that knowledge gives new strength and meaning to the parable. The Kingdom offers us both shelter and nourishment.

And still there is something more. In the third parable that we have discussed, the man who found the treasure bought the field so that he might own the treasure, and the merchant who found the pearl bought it so that it became his own. What Jesus is saying is simply that the Kingdom is *ours*. We, too, own a treasure, and a pearl of great price. In a very real way, the Kingdom belongs to each of us. It is, if you like, our natural inheritance. We have done nothing for it except to be born, and even that was not in our hands. It is a gift that is so great that we have to put down everything else in order to take it. Picture a mother walking home with her shopping, in each hand carrying a heavy bag. As she gets to the garden gate her child comes running up the path, arms reaching out for a swing and a cuddle. The shopping, however valuable and important, has to be put down so that this thing of infinitely greater importance and value might be enjoyed to the full. We are like that mother, and the Kingdom is like the child running to greet us — we simply have to put things down in order to revel in the love and the joy that we are offered. Worthiness is a concept that is foreign to the whole relationship. There is only love and welcome and gladness that we are home.

To be continued

One to One

pastoral cassettes

by Brenda Perridge

Instinctively we long to help anyone who is suffering. Sometimes those who have experienced pain, physical or emotional, and come to terms with it, are most able to support others.

'One to One' cassettes are by people who aim to do just that. Each tape has been recorded by someone who knows serious illness, death of a child or partner, loneliness or agoraphobia. (More titles will be added.) Listeners are offered sympathy and practical advice and, as the speaker tells his or her own story, the sufferer realises at once, '*Here's someone who does understand how I feel*'. All the speakers are Christians, but what they have to say is intended for anyone, Christian or not, who has one of these problems. The cassette cover includes details of helpful books and appropriate counselling agencies.

'One to One' also offers confidential help in other ways. There is a team who will pray for any listener with a general or special need. Listeners come back again with further prayer requests — a sick person wishing to be remembered at times of hospital appointments; an agoraphobic during an outing. Many who have problems but are not church members will at such times turn, even as a last resort, to God. As one said, '*I need all the help I can get!*' And another, '*Please thank the team for their love and compassion*'.

Often it's easier to talk to someone who isn't face to face. All our speakers are willing for listeners to contact them if they would like to talk further. And I am also happy to write or talk to anyone who would like more help. Frequently all that's needed is someone who will just listen, whether on the 'phone or through correspondence. Some do ask specific questions. A disabled lady wanted a means of getting to know people outside her area. I put her in touch with a national organisation suited to her needs and she told me we had widened her horizons — a happy outcome.

The tapes are used in a variety of ways. Some churches and organisations have tape libraries and can lend out appropriate tapes (and recorders if necessary). Individuals may order a tape for their own use or to loan to

neighbours, friends or family. It isn't always easy to call on someone in trouble — '*What shall I say?*' To go along and offer something positive in the form of a cassette can make the visitor more at ease. Then there is an opportunity to make a further visit to collect the tape, and perhaps the sufferer will wish to discuss it and their suffering.

Groups find the series useful. By listening they understand more fully the problems of those they may meet in the local community and become more aware of support they might offer.

Some of the cassettes available are: **Facing Incurable Illness.** Miss *Nellie Marriott* of Goodmayes, Ilford, severely disabled, blind and in constant pain, deals with facing death and finding peace of mind in suffering.

Why Haven't I Been Healed? Mrs *Gladys Pallett*, of Runwell, Wickford, talks of her disappointment at not being healed and how she has learned to be content.

Living With Loneliness. On side 1, *Barry Etheridge*, a student at Avery Hill College, suggests ways of overcoming this problem. On side 2, *Mrs Esther Reed* of Dagenham shares her deep understanding of this common problem. **The Death of a Partner.** Here *Mrs Brenda Perridge* of North Weald talks to widows and widowers of her own experience of bereavement.

Agoraphobia. Mrs *Rosemary Beattie* of Galashiels suffered for years but is now healed. In discussing her experience, she gives advice and encouragement arising from her belief that sufferers can do a lot to help themselves.

When Graeme Died. Mrs *Dorothy Munn* of Hadley Wood offers comfort to bereaved parents. Her own son died at the age of five.

Loneliness Among Young Mothers. Mrs *Margaret Nicholas* of Newport, with four young children of her own, offers sympathy and practical advice.

Each cassette costs £2.95 (including postage and packing) and can be obtained from: **Falcon AVA, Falcon Court, 32 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DB.**

Other enquiries, please, direct to: **Brenda Perridge, 8 Dukes Close, North Weald, Epping, Essex CM16 6DA.**

'I Remember...'

by Canon A St G Colthurst MA

*'Blest be the day that moved I was
A pilgrim for to be,
And blessed also be the cause
That hereto moved me.'*

The opening verse of Tubby's hymn, sung in St Paul's Cathedral at his memorial service eight years ago, expresses in his own poignant way the magnet which has drawn generations of men into Toc H during the last 60 years.

Toc H has summed up for us an attitude towards life which, in those early days immediately after the first World War, became crystallized into a 'cause'. This attitude towards life was difficult to define... but those who staggered out of the carnage of the Ypres Salient into the comparative peace of post war Britain, felt that they had been given something

precious which they wanted to pass on to their children.

But what was this 'cause'? 'To ensure that such a war should never happen again?' — Too blind to reality. 'To fight for the right?' — Too commonplace. 'To remember our fallen comrades?' — Nearer the mark, but already adopted by the British Legion. 'To capture the spirit of men who could go through Passchendaele, sing Tipperary, and kneel at the carpenter's bench in the Upper Room of the Old House at Poperinge?' — This ideal would take some capturing in the humdrum days of peace.

The combined efforts of Tubby, Alec Paterson, Barkis, Pat Leonard and others produced the absurd title 'Toc H' and added to it the deceptively simple Four

Points for the guidance of the unwary neophyte who might venture to follow in the footsteps of his battle hardened forefathers. 'To think fairly; to love widely; to build bravely; to witness humbly.' This is as ambitious a programme as any Jack the Giant killer could want; at the same time it might inspire the shy young idealist, uncertain of his foothold in the quicksand of the moral and religious uncertainty of today, to venture on the pilgrim road.

Of course, those of us who helped to start it all had little conception of the range and dimension of the Movement thus begun and little understanding of the problems involved in helping human nature to cope with a rapidly changing world. Those responsible for its growth must have felt as precarious as a group of mountaineers on Snowdon in a hurricane. Those of us, however, who still care for the precious memory of those early pioneers continue to rejoice in the companionship of men of every class, nation, and race, who, though few in numbers, stand together by the Lamp of

BIRKENHEAD - 35 years on!

by Huw Gibbs

It must be rare for a club to be run by mother and daughter in succession over a period of more than 30 years. But that's the record set by the Birkenhead Toc H Girls' Club whose lively leader, Jenny Bassett took over from her mother in 1953.

The club was set up by the former Birkenhead Branch in 1946. The Branch closed in 1961 but the club has gone on uninterrupted. Some of its earlier members — like Sheila Williams and Karen Griffiths — are now back as club leaders.

'The secret', says Jenny, 'is total involvement with the children at all times. Their loyalty is marvellous'. The club takes in 'under fives' and at ten years old members can move into the senior club and stay 'until they want to leave'. The club involves its members in serving others and they all subscribe to a fund to help local senior citizens at Christmas. The club won a handsome rose bowl recently for the best turnout in a local 'It's a Knockout' tournament.

Each club evening ends with prayers and Jenny is most emphatic that 'this will always be a Toc H Club'.



We're told that this is the 'latest craze' in dances!



'Passing the beanie bag' produces at times some skilful generalship.

Maintenance, remember the Elder Brethren with proud thanksgiving, and do their best to be true to their pledge.

*'Blest work that drove me back to pray,
To strive to be sincere;
To take my cross up day by day
With love that casts out fear'...*

Not good doggerel, but we know what Tubby meant. He meant us to try to translate the Christian life into everyday language, and discover the Love of God through the service of Man.

The secret of Toc H is, like the Gospel, worth selling your shirt for, if you wish to unchain that will o' the wisp of comradeship under the stress of completely self forgetful service.

Peguy once described the French heroine, Jeanne d'Arc as 'vivante en plein mystere avec sagacite' (living at the heart of the mystery with homely common sense). That is the spirit of Toc H - and blessed are they who find it.



Photo: Beckett Newspapers Ltd

Eighty year old Mrs Slope receives her 'flashing light' unit from the Mayor of Worthing. Lionel Holden, Southdown Central Councillor, launched the local scheme three years ago with a target of 500 lamps in five years. Mrs Slope's was their 201st so that Toc H in Worthing is well on the way to reaching their target on time.



'Say happy!'



Huw gathers an attentive audience!



The evening's 'drill to music' session.



Photo: Ted Lewis

Jenny tells Huw 'we only have to say the word and we get all the help we need from parents'.

Open Forum

Fellowship

A member of our Rotary Club recently gave a talk on 'Fellowship' which caused me to reflect on the difference between the fellowship I enjoyed for 30 years in my Branch and that which I have experienced since retiring up here in 1977. The speaker defined fellowship as a working together for the common good and this we certainly try to do in Rotary. Nevertheless, there seems to be something missing: the fellowship of my Toc H Branch was warmer, for the want of a better term.

I would be interested to know if this is true of other Toc H members who no longer have a local Branch yet are still members and still active in social work and in the Church.

Fred Staples
March, Glos

Verse — or Worse?

Some tried to take you to task for publishing (November *Point Three*) that little verse entitled 'Sunday Christian'. I

showed it to several devout churchgoers who all saw the funny side of it. When we lose the ability to laugh at ourselves it will be time to shut the shop.

Harold Chainey
Chichester

See the second verse in this series elsewhere in this issue. — Editor

'I Remember ...'

I read with interest the article by Canon Colthurst (March issue) entitled 'I Remember ...'

I too served in the 47th London Divisional Artillery, going to France in March 1915 and arriving in the Ypres Sector, after trekking up from the Somme Battle in September 1917.

I first met the Revd 'Tubby' Clayton in the Upper Room of the Old House in Poperinge, after a cousin and a few more friends had been killed at Zillebeke. I remember it helped to give me confidence to go back to the gun line again.

I have since visited the Old House

and slept in Tubby's room, but what a difference there is today from those early beginnings.

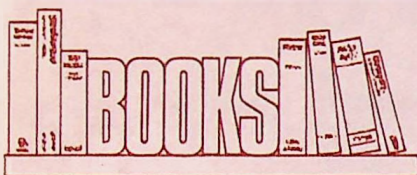
H W Short
London

Pollution

Fifty years ago the idea of pollution did not occur. Today it has become so serious an issue that a group of scientists recently warned in 'Blueprint for Survival' that if it continues at its present rate of increase, in another 50 years animal life on this planet could be extinguished without the explosion of a nuclear bomb. Pollution occurs in the atmosphere, on land and in the waters.

In the atmosphere, the vital protective belt of ozone in the stratosphere is being affected by various emissions which have risen from below; lower down one has only to visit such places as Los Angeles and indeed occasionally industrial areas of Britain to see the belt of poisonous smog which partially obscures the sun.

On land, pesticides, chemical



Pioneers for Peace by Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tims.

First published 1965 by George Allen & Unwin, re-issued 1980 by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom — Paperback £3.50.

Having read this detailed and important history, I find it almost unbelievable that a world wide organisation, with such breadth of vision and range of activities, such patience and faithful pursuance of its declared aims, such dogged determination to 'disown discouragement', should have remained as little known over its life of more than 60 years as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Not a 'quick and easy' book to read, this account of the first 50 years of the WILPF is an absorbing document, deserving a wide readership. The efforts and sufferings of the early suffragettes achieved lasting progress; the later work of various feminist movements, in spite of the absurdities of bra-burning and insistence upon such terms as 'Chairperson', remedied many injustices; the courage of the women who

spearheaded the Peace Movement in Northern Ireland earned the admiration of the world. All these endeavours, dedicated as they have been, however, seem narrow and limited in comparison with the worldwide scale of the needs perceived and tackled by this small and unique group of women who, in a century of unprecedented change and violence, not only envisaged a world where the horrors of war and oppression could be eliminated, but set themselves, their time, talents and energies to realise their vision.

Imagine the challenge and courage required to call together a congress of women of difference nations, both warring and neutral, at The Hague in 1915, in the ninth month of the first World War, to express their opposition to the conflict, to seek ways of ending it, and, far more important, to suggest steps which might lead to warfare becoming an impossibility. Their aims and ideals were nothing less.

By some they were laughed at, called naive, interfering, ill informed; some of the women faced slanderous attacks, were branded 'traitors' for having dealings with women of an enemy country. However, they attracted the active support and co-operation of an impressive number and quality of delegates who urged their respective governments to take the lead in drawing up proposals for establishing a League of Nations, which might become a

significant force for peace. Right from the start the WILPF played a part in determining how the League of Nations should work.

Never allowing themselves to be swept away by pure idealism, they gave their attention to numerous practical and humanitarian problems, which arose out of the tragedies of the two major World Wars; famine campaigns, horrors endured by Greek and Armenian women in Turkish harems, displaced persons, political prisoners, concentration camps, rights of minorities, the manufacture and sale of arms, world health problems, economic needs, conditions in prisons in various countries, an individual request from a student for work in Geneva; all these concerns and many more received the attention of this dedicated team.

At the same time, they held firmly to their conviction that the primary purpose of the WILPF was to work towards removing the causes of war rather than to alleviate its resultant sufferings, and to that end they worked, and still work, untiringly and in the face of much early apathy, if not direct opposition, of the self interest of individual countries rather than the embracing of the concept of internationalism; of the tragic and heart breaking years between 1918 and 1939, with the inevitable drift towards another war.

High as is the level of the aims and activities of the WILPF, it places great

fertilizers, and the rapid spread of concrete areas are destroying the vitality of the soil and an ever increasing amount of animal life. Human health is being affected in many ways. 'Dust bowls' are continually occurring in new places and our trees are diminishing alarmingly.

Our rivers are beginning to dry up in many places owing to the tapping of subterranean springs to provide water for the cities. What water remains in the rivers is becoming increasingly polluted, so that the reaches of many, notably the Rhine, but also British and others have become completely sterile. Nor is the sea immune: whole areas across the Western Mediterranean and outside large ports elsewhere, are largely sterile. Even far out in the Pacific effects of pollution are being noted.

The root cause of pollution is the amazing increase of the human race during the last century so that the planet is becoming overcrowded. This has happened, in spite of two destructive wars, because of the great improvement in medicine and hygiene and increase in food production, to which there is a

limit; and it is to be noted that with the rise in the quantity of food produced, the quality has greatly deteriorated. Man has behaved recklessly.

Japan has brought the increase of its population under control and China is embarking on a stringent programme. Elsewhere, the rise in population is proceeding almost unchecked: that of India, already over populated, is increasing at the rate of 12,000,000 per annum.

What should be done to remedy the situation is too large a subject for this letter but deserves most serious consideration. The Bible has little direct guidance, because the conditions which produce pollution are so entirely modern. Nevertheless, there are two principles which apply: (1) Reverence for God's creation and (2) man's duty, being created in God's image and likeness, to love, preserve and cherish what God has created, not least the human race.

All this vitally concerns Toc H.

J Gwynne
Quenington, Glos

Leeks or Daffodils?

To add a further explanation to the many offered last year in respect of the national emblem of Wales, I throw in the following quotation from 'In search of Wales' by H V Morton: *As grandson of Katherine of Valois, Harry Tudor used the green and white of Valois in his coat of arms. As a sign to each other his partisans used the green and white for a test. They did not carry it about with them. If they met each other in the field they simply pulled up a blade of grass, a wild hyacinth, a daffodil, anything that showed a green stem and a white root. If they met in a house they could lift a leek or an onion or any vegetable which showed the two colours. And so we wear the leek or scorn it for the daffodil in forgetful remembrance of that day.*

I would not dare comment on its reasonableness or otherwise and if it has already been given I apologise for my negligence!

Ethel Davey
Cardiff

emphasis on the importance of the individual, 'who alone is a reality and whose suffering and joy, action and thought, make up the life of the world', a sentiment near to the belief and motivation of Toc H.

This book follows the work of the WILPF through the times and attendant problems of the Ethiopian War; the Spanish War; World War Two, in which physical courage was displayed by its members in occupied countries and moral courage afterwards to recommence their work towards world peace; Korea; Vietnam; Arab/Israeli relations; East/West relations; recognition of China by the United Nations; the threat of nuclear war; world hunger and countless other areas of human misery and suffering, with unrelenting efforts towards peace in all those circumstances and always with an unshakeable belief that ultimate complete world disarmament is the only solution to the elimination of war.

In 1946 the International President of the WILPF was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize and the Chairman, making the presentation, said, 'She has shown us that the reality we seek must be won through hard work in the world in which we live, but she has shown us more than this: that one does not become exhausted and that defeat gives new courage for the struggle to those who have within them the holy fire,' and referring to the WILPF Congress of 1919, he added, 'it would have been wise if the

statesmen of the world had listened to the proposals of the women. But in the men's society in which we are living, proposals coming from women are not usually taken seriously.'

Not everyone would agree with all the views and methods of the WILPF, and it, too, has suffered from time to time from its own internal divergencies, but the utter conviction, the unquenchable fire of belief in their ideals, the unsparing work and the calibre of the women who were drawn into WILPF have made incalculable contributions to the cause of world peace, a cause which has much to do and far to go, but a cause which will continue to be served in the future, as in the past, by people like these women who have been prepared to dedicate their lives to its prosecution.

Betty Cornick

'God Help Us' (A layman's enquiry into the complex problems of War, Peace and Prayer)

by Winifred Eastment

Trenchant questions are asked in this wee book on the vital issues of war and peace. Can God stop war? Can our prayers bring peace? For what kind of peace indeed are we praying? Self protection for myself? Or for my neighbour? The author poses all these problems, and handles them sincerely and fearlessly. Is peace the absence of tension, or the presence of

justice? Can it ever be right to condone violence, or to stand aside from involvement with my brother's dire peril? Are our actions (individually or as a nation) prompted by cowardice, hypocrisy or moral justification?

There are no easy answers, and the subject lends itself to creative discussion if the right issues are faced frankly. When violence is threatened, is it morally ethical to meet force with force? When life itself, or morality, is in jeopardy, the Bible shows quite clearly where our motives for action should lie. When Our Lord met corrupt practices He responded with stern, sharp action, as the Temple traders soon discovered. So, is violence the beginning of a new era, by God's permission, however traumatic the shock of war to those who have prayed to Love, for peace?

The author's experience on prayer is valuable and wisely emphasises the need for sincerity, truth and acceptance of the consequences. It is not an easy book to follow, for it reads more like a friendly chat with frequent interruptions and irrelevances, as well as some extremely long sentences. Nevertheless it is excellent value, and well worth reading, especially as providing useful subject headings for Branch discussion.

MacGregor Pearson

This book may be obtained (price £2.00) from: Dawn Press, 1 Spratt Hall Road, Wanstead, London E11 2RQ.

For your diary

Reunion

Staff and CEC members of the former Women's Association are holding their reunion weekend at Alison House from 15 to 17 May. The cost of the weekend will be £17. All enquiries and applications, please, to Mrs M Berry, 'High Tor', 28 Vicarage Road, Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 5HY.

Festival

An area Festival will take place at Ashby de la Zouch (Leics) on Saturday 20 June. There will be a guided tour of St Helen's Parish Church and the Castle, tea from 4.30 pm, and an evening programme starting promptly at 6.30 pm which will include a guest speaker and a male voice choir. Within the Mid-Eastern Region, invitations will go out to Branches. Anyone else interested is invited to write to: Toc H, 1 & 2 St Helen's Church Walk, Ashby de la Zouch, Leics.

IYDP



Loddon Vale District in North Hampshire have booked Cuddesdon House for a week from 11-18 July, and places are being reserved for nine members who will each come with a disabled friend, and share the experience of living together. Nicola Vaughan-Williams of the Photons Group will lead the week, with Padre Bob Knight. Nicola is the Area Group Leader for IYDP, for Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex, and is herself a student at Farnborough 6th Form College. She takes part in Southern Region projects, and has inspired this experiment in group living at Cuddesdon. One younger member has already persuaded her employers (one of the big five Banks), to give her leave and the £50 needed for her disabled friend. Anyone keen to join this IYDP week, preferably in Nicola's territory, please write to Bob Knight at Hydaway, Hyde Street, Winchester, Hampshire for more information.



Photos: Ted Lewis

Following 1980's Saughall camp for Liverpool children, a reunion party for volunteers and children was held in Birkenhead. Every Branch in the District contributed to the party's success.



Photos: Les Smith

Gravesend Men's Branch's fourth annual mini-handi and party for the handicapped was shared by 36 disabled friends. Members of the Women's Branch, friends and relatives, Red Cross cadets and National Sea Training College trainees all rallied round to make it a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Special guests included the Mayor and Mayoress of Gravesham. A number of local firms and groups donated cash or kind.



Photo: Gravesend & Dartford Reporter

Inter-Faith Dialogue - a way of life

by John Bowers

(Part Two: A Search for Reality)

Religion is for me the search for truth and reality beyond the boundaries of science. As this search progresses, so does our religious practice and experience – worship, prayer, love, peace through surrender to the will of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, 'tele-guidance' from our guardian angels, and perception of the purpose of life and death.

This search, I believe, Christians should share with those of other faiths. We have much to learn from them, and perhaps we can best help them by introducing them to the life and teachings of Jesus – most of all his unique teaching about love – rather than by trying to 'con-vert' them, ie to turn them from their honestly held beliefs and to impose our own upon them.

I hope, too, that our dialogue will include scientists, whether religious, agnostic or atheist, for science and religion are different approaches to the same reality. Nevertheless, as our search continues, we learn, I think, that intellect, reason and our physical senses, essential as they are, have only a partial and limited function. We shall learn too that words, even those of the holy scriptures, are often inadequate and misleading. As Lao Tsu said in about 600 BC *'the reality you can describe is not real reality'*. The Buddhists carry this caution rather far by refusing to use any word for God – the indescribable and undefinable.

Yoga and other schools of contemplation teach us that only when our intellect is stilled and our ego-centred will is disengaged, and words no longer scurry through our minds, are we able to perceive, or rather receive, the pattern of life through channels other than our physical senses, and 'listen' with the inner spiritual core of our being – *'the Kingdom of Heaven is within you'*. Words of course are useful, and inspired words such as the Lord's Prayer have profound significance and power. Nevertheless I believe that the Hindu mystics are right in regarding verbal prayer as rather a primitive form of religious practice. Ultimately and essentially, so it seems to me, worship and prayer must be – forgive the jargon – non-verbal, two-way, extra-sensory communication. *'God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth'*.

Coming back to the gospels after an

experience of Islamic contemplation, the insight came over me that this was what Jesus was teaching his disciples. Is this what he meant by the Kingdom of Heaven within you, being born again of the spirit, becoming as a child, and even by that much distorted word 'repentance'? The experience culminated for the disciples at Pentecost – the ability to move into another mode of communication, to listen without ears and see without eyes, to receive the power of the Spirit and reflect it into the world. Certainly there is in it the innocence and wonder of childhood.

In a sense this extra-sensory experience is a training for death, when we shall be separated from our sense organs and our brains. *'Except ye be born again ...'* But it is also, and more immediately, a training for life, for by opening oneself to the power of the spirit one's batteries are recharged, one's inner perception refined, and gradually, often very gradually, one's physical senses and intellect are sharpened, and one's physical body healed of 'dis-ease'.

Whilst I owe this experience to teachers from other faiths – to inter-faith dialogue in a very deep sense – others have found it and will find it in their own religion. The Acts of the Apostles is full of reference to it in the early Church and to the clairvoyance and 'tele-guidance' that go with it. Through the Middle Ages it survived in the contemplative monastic orders, and now the church is experiencing a great popular resurgence in the charismatic movement and interest in contemplative prayer.

If then the experience is so valuable, at times even ecstatic, and central to the teaching of Jesus, should everyone be seeking it? Is there something wrong in not having it? I would answer 'no' to both these questions.

Here again inter-faith dialogue might help us. In Eastern schools of spiritual development, a wise and experienced teacher – a 'Guru' – is considered essential to guide you in your search. As my Indonesian teacher once said *'Surrendering is very open, anything can fill it ... and what happens next is up to you'*. So the search is not without its dangers – dangers of group hysteria, self deception, explosion of one's unresolved conflicts, confusing one's personal desires with the will of God, hypnotic influence,

even possession of unholy powers. Many sincere and religious people have a very reasonable fear of mysticism and 'way out' practices. So pursue your search for reality with caution and prayer. Do not seek experience that you are afraid of. Do not be in a hurry. Do not pursue spiritual power for personal profit or ego-centric ends, nor yet out of curiosity, nor for kicks, nor to seek proof for what you do not believe: *'Thou shalt not test the Lord thy God'*. And if you are given the experience of deep contemplation, surrender, do not over indulge. Not more than half an hour twice a week was the advice I received as a beginner. Finally, do not boast of your experiences or seek to analyse them – for as I said words are inadequate and often misleading.

Note: John Bowers has been invited to discuss in a third article just what he means by 'contemplation' and how it is related to meditation, prayer, worship and 'repentance' – a word which he feels has been sadly misinterpreted by the Christian Church. – Editor

The Least of These

I've seen Jesus – oh, lots of times.

Once, when He didn't see me
He was being very young,
Lying in a pram,
Sucking His toes.

Another time
He was an old lady.
It's cold today, I said.
He smiled,
Delighted at being found out
But He didn't let on.

I remember Him best
Outside the Underground,
Looking scruffy.
A good disguise,
But I knew Him at once.

He looked cold
So I got Him some tea;
Then He gave the game away.

God bless you, He said.

CSS

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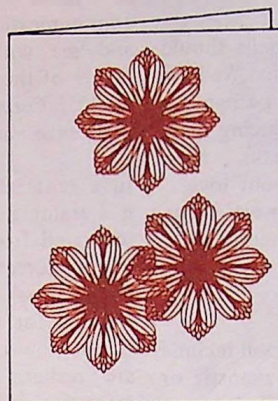
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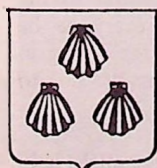
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